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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001236

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DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS; NSC FOR E. MILLARD

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07-26-14

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [CE](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: EIGHT POSSIBLE PRO-KARUNA FACTION MEMBERS
KILLED IN LIKELY LTTE ATTACK

Refs: (A) Colombo 1219 and previous

(U) Classified by Dean Thompson, Acting Deputy Chief of Mission. Reasons 1.5 (b,d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: LTTE attacks against breakaway Eastern LTTE leader Karuna's faction continued on July 25, this time close to Colombo. Eight people, possibly including Karuna's deputy, were killed in a "safe house" in Kottawa, an outer suburb of Colombo. While the identities of the killers are not known, media reports suggest they were LTTE (Wanni) cadres. Pro-LTTE website TamilNet reported that the killers were actually dissidents within the group of pro-Karuna cadres. The GSL released a statement on July 26 condemning the killings. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attacks against breakaway Eastern LTTE leader Karuna's faction continued over the weekend - this time close to Colombo. Before dawn on July 25, eight people were killed in a "safe house" in Kottawa, an outer suburb of Colombo. Local media reported that several of Karuna's top aides (including his Deputy) and a (Sinhalese) Sri Lankan Army (SLA) informant were among the dead. The dead pro-Karuna cadres may have been members of a group of Tamil youth arrested at a temple near Polonnaruwa in early July, and were released (allegedly) with the assistance of military intelligence. The LTTE was very unhappy with this situation, and later bombed the temple. The mystery Sinhalese man in the Colombo area safehouse may have been one of two Sinhalese men who police sources reported were at the temple with the pro-Karuna cadres.

3. (C) While the identities of the killers are not known, media reports suggest they were LTTE (Wanni) cadres. The media also reported that the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) intercepted a message between two LTTE (Wanni) cadres in Ampara, south of Batticaloa, in which the Wanni cadres stated that they had just returned from killing eight pro-Karuna cadres. The SLA spokesman has denied this to the media and to poloff.

4. (U) Meanwhile, Pro-LTTE website TamilNet reported that dissidents within the Karuna faction killed their own associates because of differences within the group. TamilNet reported that the site of the killings was actually a "military intelligence safe house," and that after the killings, the cadre escaped and surrendered to LTTE (Wanni) cadre in Ampara the same day.

5. (U) The GSL released a strong statement on July 26 condemning the killings, noting that "it is clear that this resort to terrorist violence does not conform to the spirit and letter of the ceasefire agreement and does not augur well for the smooth commencement of direct negotiations between GOSL and LTTE. The Government repeats its firm determination to maintain law and order and to take necessary action in accordance with international norms against the scourge of terrorism that continues to affect Sri Lanka and other countries."

6. (C) COMMENT: At this point, the details of what happened in Kottawa are murky. Although the SLA denies that there was a military operative in the group, the presence of a Sinhala man with a group of high-level pro-Karuna cadre raises questions. The police continue to investigate, but no arrests have been made. As Karuna's cadre travel around the island, it seems that the internecine warfare in the east is following them. The July 25 attack was the latest in a string of similar violent incidents. In the meantime, increased security in Colombo may emerge as the only tangible outcome of this case. END COMMENT.

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